United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General expresses regret that United Nations has not yet received specific proposals from Iraqi authorities concerning renewal of Memorandum of Understanding, which expired yesterday, but trusts that a positive response "will be forthcoming".

+ Commander of United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia, General Satish Nambiar, decides to assume his responsibilities in Sectors North and South of Croatia as of tomorrow, 2 July; to meet with Croatian leaders in Zagreb tomorrow.

+ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, to go on working visit to Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Yugoslavia for "first-hand look" at humanitarian operations in the troubled region.

+ Secretary-General en route to London following meetings in Dakar.

+ Secretary-General appoints Norwegian arms control and disarmament expert Sverre Lodgaard as Director of United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, succeeding Jayantha Dhanapala of Sri Lanka.

+ Free exercise of right to self-determination for people of Non-Self-Governing Territories recommended by Decolonization Subcommittee at conclusion of 1992 session.

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The Secretary-General has expressed regret that the United Nations has not yet received specific proposals from the Iraqi authorities concerning the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding on United Nations humanitarian operations in Iraq, which expired yesterday.

In a statement issued at Headquarters today, the Secretary-General noted that while contacts and discussions on the Memorandum were taking place, the United Nations personnel would continue their humanitarian activities in Iraq under the existing arrangements. He said the Memorandum continued to provide

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an appropriate basis for the United Nations Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme in Iraq, which is designed to meet the needs of vulnerable groups throughout the country. He expressed the hope that a positive response from Iraq would be forthcoming very soon for the extension of the Memorandum.

On 2 June, Under-Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, Coordinator for Humanitarian Relief Assistance submitted for the approval of the Iraqi authorities a draft text on the renewed Memorandum. Last week, he conveyed an invitation to the Iraqi Government to send a representative to New York to discuss the matter urgently, but has so far not received any "positive response". The Memorandum, which sets the modalities for United Nations humanitarian operations in Iraq, was agreed upon initially in April 1991 following the Persian Gulf war, and renewed in November 1991.

A United Nations spokesman told correspondents that the Coordinator of the Humanitarian Assistance in Baghdad was currently meeting with Iraqi officials on this matter.

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In Croatia, the Commander of the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), General Satish Nambiar, has decided to assume his responsibilities in Sectors North and South as of tomorrow, 2 July, a United Nations spokesman said today. This decision followed the adoption yesterday by the Security Council of resolution 762, which approved the Secretary-General's recommendation that UNPROFOR assume its full responsibilities in those sectors "as soon as feasible" and, simultaneously, undertake monitoring functions in the "pink zones". Those zones are certain areas of Croatia which are controlled by the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) and populated largely by Serbs. General Nambiar was now on his way to Zagreb to discuss the modalities of his decision and would be meeting with the leaders in Croatia tomorrow.

The spokesman further informed correspondents that a Centre for the Coordination of Humanitarian Air Flights to Sarajevo had been established in Geneva by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). He also said that the redeployment of the Canadian convoy of United Nations troops from Croatia to Sarajevo airport was proceeding normally, despite "some difficulties on the way".

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, is scheduled to travel to Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Yugoslavia from 6 to 9 July for a first-hand look at UNHCR humanitarian operations in the troubled region, the Agency said today. During the visit, she plans to meet local authorities, representatives of non-governmental organizations and UNHCR staff -- all of whom are working under extremely difficult and often dangerous conditions.

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The working visit will also give Mrs. Ogata the opportunity to evaluate the joint UNHCR/UNICEF/WHO programme covering more than 1.7 million refugees and displaced people in the war-torn region -- the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II.

As the lead United Nations agency for provision of humanitarian assistance in the region, UNHCR and its partners have plans in place for the airlift of relief supplies to the more than 300,000 people under siege in Sarajevo for the past three months. Under the plan, the airlift would start as soon as the United Nations Protection Forces in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) providing security at the airport give the go-ahead. Several countries have indicated their willingness to provide planes for the airlift.

UNHCR personnel, in Sarajevo since mid-June, have worked with local authorities and three non-governmental organizations to set up a distribution network for the city itself. The agency's relief supplies within Bosnia-Herzegovina for the month of June totalled more than 650 metric tons, a significant portion of it destined for Sarajevo and surrounding areas.

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Briefing correspondents today on the Secretary-General's visits to Africa and Europe, his Spokesman said Mr. Boutros-Ghali was on his way to London following meetings in Dakar earlier today with the President of the Constitutional Council of Senegal and with Chairman Arafat of Palestine. Mr. Boutros-Ghali had also met with the Secretary-General of the Islamic Conference and with the President of Sierra Leone.

The Secretary-General would meet tomorrow in London with British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and would have a working dinner with Prime Minister John Major.

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The Secretary-General, after consulting the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, has appointed Norwegian arms control and disarmament expert Sverre Lodgaard as Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). He succeeds Jayantha Dhanapala of Sri Lanka, who served as Director of UNIDIR until 30 June.

Mr. Lodgaard, a member of the Norwegian Government's Advisory Council on Arms Control and Disarmament, was Director of the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo. Mr Lodgaard, who is 47 years old, has authored and edited over 150 publications on international affairs, arms control and disarmament. He served as advisor to the Norwegian delegations to many disarmament meetings, including all Review Conferences of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, from 1975 to 1990.

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Awareness should be fostered among the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories as to the possibilities open to them for exercising their right to self-determination, according to a recommendation by the Decolonization Subcommittee of the Special Committee on decolonization.

Concluding its 1992 session yesterday, the Subcommittee called on the administering Powers of Non-Self-Governing Territories, together with the Governments of those Territories, to facilitate programmes of political education in order to develop such an awareness. By the terms of an omnibus draft on the administration of the Territories, it would stress the responsibility of the administering Powers to create the conditions in the Territories that would enable their people to exercise freely and without interference their inalienable right to self-determination and independence. It would also urge Member States to support efforts to eradicate colonialism by the year 2000.

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